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POETIC FRAGMENTS FROM THE GENIZAH

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III. FROM A DIVAN OF 'ALVAN BEN ABRAHAM

THE following poetic letters are found in two Genizah fragments.¹ The similarity in the handwriting of the two fragments at once suggested the possibility that they were parts of the same Divan, and on closer examination it became evident that one was actually the continuation of the other. One of the two letters, addressed to Jacob ben Alfarag Almagazili, has its beginning in one fragment and its conclusion in the other.²

The interest that attaches itself to these texts lies not so much in their literary and linguistic merits as in the fact, that they give us the names of new men whose importance, though still vague, may become clearer in the light of future discoveries.

Concerning the author, 'Alvan ben Abraham,³ no information has come to light heretofore, as far as I can

¹ T-S., LOAN 9, consisting of one leaf, paper, and T-S., LOAN 60, consisting of two leaves, paper, each leaf being 19 x 14 c.m.

² See below, text No. 4, l. 11-12. Not only the context but also the acrostic proves the continuation, for this letter, as far as it goes in T-S. 9, has **אני עלון בן אב** in acrostic, while the beginning of T-S. 60 supplies the remaining **רהם ח"ו** [ק].

³ In transliterating **עלון** by 'Alvan, I followed Neubauer and Cowley, *Cat. Bodle.* II, *Index*. See, however, Steinschneider, *Introduction to the*

ascertain. He seems, however, to have sprung of a family well known in the East, and for this reason, I deem it proper to group here together all the data furnished by the Genizah about this family. In a legal document, coming from "the communities dwelling in the country of Tyre" (הקהלות השרויים במדינת צור), dated the first of Marḥeshwan 4789 A.M. (1029 C.E.), one of the signatories is עלון בר בלא⁴. One of the parties to a marriage contract, dated at Fostât 1378 Sel. (1067 C.E.), is ר' וחיש ברר' עלון נ"ע⁵, and in a similar document, likewise dated at Fostât, 1.4 Sel., the man's name is יוסף בר ישועה בר עלון⁶. In a report of judicial proceedings, dated at Fostât in 1396 Sel. (1085 C.E.), the names of the parties are רבי יצחק בן רבי אלהסין מנצור and רבי עלון הכהן⁷. We also have two letters addressed to בני עייש⁸ and one letter to ב"ר חייא נ"ע⁹, in which mention is made of יהודה ריש בלא, probably Judah ben Joseph of Kairwan.¹⁰ Finally we have also a liturgical poem, beginning ידיר חתני בואי לגני, with the acrostic of Jacob 'Alvan.¹¹

In none of these documents, however, do we find the name of our author, and the only conclusion we may draw

Arabic Literature of the Jews, No. 534, where ערואן is transliterated by 'Ulwan, or 'Olwan, and also 'Ilwan. Perhaps עלואן and עלון are two distinct names.

⁴ *Neub. Cat.*, II, 2873, 37.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2873, 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2877, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2834, 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2876, 53; 2878, 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2876, 70. The address on the reverse side of this letter reads

فسطاط مصر at أبو الحسن بن عی.

¹⁰ See Poznański, *אנשי קירואן*, No. 22, and *JQR.*, New Series, I, 237.

¹¹ *Neub., Cat.* II, 2838—AA,d, 33; comp. also Worman, *Forms of Addresses in Genizah Letters*, Nos. lxviii, lxxv (*JQR.*, XIX, 739-740).

from them is, that the 'Alvan family flourished in Egypt and in Asia Minor at least as early as 1029.¹² And just as the above mentioned documents are silent about our author so are also the poetic letters printed here for the first time. Nevertheless, there are a few general facts which we may justly deduce from them. It is safe to assume, for instance, that 'Alvan ben Abraham was a religious authority in his community, since he presumed to lay down the law in ritual matters.¹³ That he was not the chief religious authority is evident from the fact, that he had to appeal to a certain R. Ḥananiah for authoritative support.¹⁴ This R. Ḥananiah, whom 'Alvan addresses as "our master, the father of the Yeshibah,"¹⁵ seems to have gone to Aleppo on some communal mission.¹⁶ In his absence, some of his enemies, who were also inimical to 'Alvan, tried to usurp his authority.¹⁷ In fact, one of them, whose name is not mentioned,¹⁸ succeeded, for a time, in getting control of the community and this proved disastrous to the honest men of the congregation.¹⁹ After a while, however, 'Alvan was in a position to write to Ḥananiah that his authority had again been recognized.²⁰ Our letters give us no clue whether Ḥananiah remained in Aleppo or not, but from one of them, addressed to a certain Mukhtār, it seems that the community in which 'Alvan lived again stood in need

¹² This family name is found also in much later times; comp. Steinschneider, *Cat. Bod.*, 3502, 4304, 6916, 14.

¹³ See below, text No. 1, l. 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 1, 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 4, 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 2. Unfortunately the last part of the second line in this letter which contained some description of this man is no longer legible.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 4-6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 3, especially l. 5, 7.

of a chief religious authority. In that letter he recounts all the misery into which the people have fallen on account of maladministration, and asks Mukhtār to appoint the son of Rabbi Isaac, referring perhaps to Abraham ben Isaac ibn Batah Alraḥbi mentioned in the sixth letter. As an historic document, relating to the internal management of Jewish communal life in ancient times, it deserves to be translated, though allowance must be made for its poetic exaggeration.

1. "My intercession has been made void"; he says, "she who was once joyous has been robbed of her joy, and she stumbled and became an object of derision.
2. She has been brought down low, to the ends of all boundaries she is scattered, crushed, and oppressed,
3. Distress has surrounded her, want has encompassed her, and a change of laws has been decreed concerning her.
4. Her graven statutes are changed, she has become cheaper than refuse, and has sunk to the lowest level.
5. They have crushed her with evil devices, choked her with violence and falsehood, and she found no respite from oppression.
6. They plotted to slander her, to torment her with extorting tribute, to crush her like ashes reduced to powder.
7. She had hoped for the shining of a light, but instead of light she grew dark and gloomy, and she resigned herself to the light of heaven.

8. Look at her calamity, with the guidance of thy word guide her, O Master, and choose the scholar, son of Rabbi Isaac, may his soul rest in peace.”²¹

All these points, however, do not help us identify either ‘Alvan or Ḥananiah. About the identity of the latter we could easily lose ourselves in conjectures,²² but it is better to leave the question open and wait for future discoveries in the Genizah to solve it. The other men mentioned in these letters, viz. Jacob ben Jeshua (Alfarag) Almagāzili to whom letters 4 and 8 are addressed, Abraham ben Isaac and Isaac ben Jefet ibn Batah (letters 6, 7), perhaps father and son, Hillel ben קרה Alḥalabi (from Aleppo ?) אֶלְעָאֲרַפִּי, also called Abu Alfadl Mazliaḥ (letter 9), and Isaac אֶלְאֶעֻזַּי Al’atar (letter 10) are likewise unknown as far as I can ascertain, and our letters give us no clue to their time or place.

From the specific charges which ‘Alvan, in his first

²¹ *Ibid.*, No. 5. I am tempted to put forth the suggestion, that the expression וּשְׁנֵי דְתוֹת עָלֶיהָ הוּחָק, in line 3, can be taken to mean, that “conversion has been forced upon her.” This would lead us to think that ‘Alvan is not speaking here of one community but of the whole Jewry, having in mind perhaps the religious persecution which the Jews suffered under the Almohade dynasty. But I reject this hypothesis, because, in the first place, we know of no great Talmudic authority in the twelfth century by the name of Hananiah, with whom we could identify our Ḥananiah, and secondly, the appeal of ‘Alvan to Mukhtar to appoint a certain scholar could not apply in the case where the whole Jewish people were concerned. Still the hypothesis was worth stating.

²² We might, for instance, identify our Ḥananiah with the father of Sherira. We find also a מֵתִיבְתָּא [מתִּיבְתָּא] חֲנַנְיָה ר’ חֲנַנְיָה, mentioned together with Sherira, in a document dated at Bagdad 998 (Neub., *Cat.*, II, 2876, 49). This Ḥananiah cannot be Sherira’s father, for the latter could no longer have been alive then. On the other hand, if we go down to a much later period, we find that Ḥarizi, in speaking of the prominent men of Aleppo, mentions חֲנַנְיָה מִקְרֹר הַחֲסִידִים (הַחֲסִידִים), ed. Kaminka, 365).

letter to Ḥananiah, brought against his opponents,²³ we incidentally gather fresh proof, that the law which declares an animal with pulmonary lobes adhering to the chest to be unfit for food, was for a long time disputed in many countries. From a Gaonic Responsum, cited in various Halakic works and lately edited more fully from the Genizah,²⁴ it has been known, that the two Academies of Babylon prohibited the meat of such an animal.²⁵ The same source, however, tells us also that, while the people of Africa followed the Babylonian Academies, some people in Andalusia and Fez did not observe this restriction, relying upon the authority of R. Jacob ben Mordecai Gaon of Sura, who was reported to have permitted it.²⁶ From another source, the account of Isaac ben Dorbelo,²⁷ we further learn that as late as 960, the Jews of Palestine permitted themselves to eat of the meat of such an animal, relying upon the same authority.²⁸ It was not, therefore, from mere lawlessness that the opponents of 'Alvan allowed themselves to declare such an animal fit for food but because they followed a different school. And it is possible that in this ritual dispute we have one more of

²³ See below text No. 1, l. 5.

²⁴ Ginzberg, *Geonica* II, 28-31, No. xv. See also Marx, *ad. loc.*, in *ZfjhB.*, XIII, 166-167.

²⁵ „וכך מנהג שתי ישיבות דסירכא דליכא ליה בדקוּתא וטרפח“ (Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 30, l. 16).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 17-18, 20. The reading there is *ואנשי מקצת אנדרלם ופרס*, but in the older editions it is *ואנשי מקצת אנדרלם ושבאפס* and Harkavy's emendation of *באפס* for *באפס* (מאסף, St. Petersburg 1902, p. 40, n. 13) is very plausible.

²⁷ See Büchler, *Relation D'Isaac b. Dorbelo* (*REJ.*, XLIV, 237-243).

²⁸ Büchler justly remarks (*ibid.*, 241) that the responsum of R. Jacob Gaon, upon which the Palestinians relied, belonged to his earlier activities, while in later life, at the urgent arguments of his colleagues, he modified his opinion.

those variances (חלופי מנהנים) which existed between the Babylonians and the Palestinians.²⁹

(T-S. LOAN 9, recto)

- 1.
- 1 [פ]ר...³⁰ וְשִׁמְחֵתִי, צִעֲקֵתִי³¹ וְשִׁבְחֵתִי [לֵא]ל [ש]ן הַכְּנִיסָה אֵלַי צוּבָה³²;
- 2 כֹּל לְמָרוֹם נִשְׁאָתִי, רְנוּ[ת] וּבִרְכוֹת הַרְבֵּיתִי עַל הַשְׁמֹעָה הַטּוֹבָה;
- 3 יִשְׁלֹמֶה לְמֵאד יִגְדֹל כְּתֻקָּה³³ הַ[מ]רֹמִים³⁴ וְהַמְּנוּחָל³⁵, וְיִשְׁנֶעָה לָּהּ
לְהַרְחִיבָה³⁶.
- 4 עֲצֵתִי³⁷ לְהַגִּיד לָּהּ מֶה עָשׂוּ פִּזְרֵי עֲלֶיהָ הַרוֹצִים אֶמְרָהּ לְעִיבָה³⁸,

²⁹ It is not mentioned by Müller in his חלופי מנהנים.

³⁰ Every line consists of three parts, the first two rhyme with each other, while the third rhymes with the third of every other line. Each line has also two letters of the Alphabet in acrostic. For this reason the first line of our fragment must have begun with ב, and the letter in its original state must have had at least eight more lines preceding it, to contain the letters of the Alphabet from א to ע.

³¹ The use of צעק as a synonym of שמח is unusual. Perhaps it should read צחקתי.

³² Aleppo. See Schwartz, תבואות הארץ (Jerusalem 1845), 19a: „ויעיר חלב (אלעפא) נקרא' עד היום בלשון העם ארם צובה לפי שמקובל אצלם שהיתה מטפולין של ארץ ארם צובה“.

³³ Ec. 6, 10.

³⁴ Ne. 9, 5.

³⁵ The Pu. Pt. of גדל in the sense of magnified, which is not biblical.

³⁶ = It pertains to you to extend help. For the use of לך in the sense of עליך, comp. ולנו הסגירו I Sam. 23, 20.

³⁷ It could also be read עֲצָתִי comp. שמע במעמד (Kalir, (קרובות לפ' שקלים). The indication of the paragraph is found in the MS. Not only is the Alphabetic acrostic ended here, but there is also a transition in subject, from his congratulations to his appeal for help.

³⁸ The MS. is not clear and the last word may read לעביבה, in which case the meaning would be “to obscure your words.” See ערוך s. v.

- 5 ³⁹וַיָּבִיאוּ שׁוֹר וַיִּשְׁחַט [ט]וֹהוּ, וּבִשְׁחִיטָתוֹ גָּ[ר] מוֹהוּ⁴⁰, וְהָיָה בּוֹ סִרְכָּה⁴⁰ רְלָבָה.
- 6 נִמְתִּי: "טָרַף הוּא", גָּ[מ]וֹ: "בָּשָׂר הוּא", וְגַם אָמְרוּ: "הַבָּשָׂר תִּתְעַבֶּה"⁴²?
- 7 הַשִּׁיעִי⁴³ בְּכַתְבָּה אֲדוֹנִי, שֶׁלַּחְהוּ מֵהֶרָה לְהוֹשִׁיעֲנִי, וְאוֹתִי אֶל תַּעֲזֹבָה;
- 8 מֶרֶה יִמְרָה כָּל־זֶר וּבִלְדַע, חֲפָצִים מִנִּי לְהַפְרַע⁴⁴ וְהָאֵל גְּמוּלָם יִשִּׁיבָה.
- 9 הֵן פְּחָבְתָּ [י] מָה הֵם עֹשִׂים, חֲלָקָ⁴⁵ בְּכַתְבָּה, וְשִׁים חֲרָמוֹת⁴⁶ עַל מִבְּשִׁיר
- מִתְעַבָּה⁴⁷;
- 10 שְׁלֹמוֹת מִנִּי קֶבֶל, וְאוֹיְבָה הָאֵל יַחֲבֵל, אֲדַנִּינוּ חֲנֻנִיה, אֲב הַיִּשִּׁיבָה.

³⁹ The use of the conjunction here would seem to show that there are some words missing, and in fact we might expect here a line beginning with ל to complete the acrostic עלון. But the MS. shows no sign of omission. For this reason, the ל of להגדיל in the preceding line must be taken as part of the acrostic, and the use of the conjunction ו is necessitated by this very acrostic.

⁴⁰ Comp. *Hullin* 9a.

⁴¹ MS. reads סלכה.

⁴² Ps. 107, 18.

⁴³ Read הושיעה.

⁴⁴ Comp. *Mishnah Baba Mes.* iv. 1 מי שפרע מאנשי דור המבול.

⁴⁵ This expression seems to be common in Gaonic writings; comp., for instance, Ginzberg, *Geonica*, II, 31, l. 9 להם מה שחקקנו להם comp. also the expression חוקים שחקקתי לך *Kiddushin* 39a.

⁴⁶ Comp. Ginzberg, *ibid.*, l. 11-13. ...התרו בהן מי שבודק סירכא דליבא.... שיש מן הדין לנדותם ולהלקותם

⁴⁷ Is. 49, 7, MS. has this word punctuated מתעבה. The more correct reading would be מתעבה.

2. וְאֵלֶּיהָ אֵינָא⁴⁸.

- 1 אֲבָרָהָ הָאֲמוּנָה⁴⁹ וְנִגְעָהָ⁵⁰, בְּמַלְּהָ הָאֲמֵת וְנִתְחַלְחַלָּהָ⁵¹, גַּם בְּעַל דִּיעַת
גִּלְהָ⁵².
- 2 הֵן נִתְקַיִּים לְפָנֵינוּ וְנִעֲשֶׂה בְּאַרְצֵינוּ הָגֵר שׁ... נוֹ עֲלִינוּ... עֲלָהָ⁵³.
- 3 בְּזֻמּוֹת⁵⁴ הוּא מְדַבֵּר⁵⁵, חֲשָׁבוּנִי⁵⁶ רַעֲי⁵⁷ מִגִּבֹּר⁵⁸, כְּטִפֶּשׁ תּוֹעָה מִדֶּרֶךְ
סְלֻלָה;
- 4 יֶאֱרֹב [לְדָ] בְּרִי⁵⁹ רַעֲי, כְּזֶעַם לְהַפְרִיעַ⁶⁰, לְדַחוּף מֵאֲמִינִים וּלְטַלְטֵלָה

⁴⁸ I assume that this letter was written to Hananiah, because it is inserted between two letters which are distinctly addressed to him. The Alphabetic acrostic is not so regularly distributed, some lines have more letters and some less.

⁴⁹ Comp. *Hullin* 9a.

⁵⁰ Comp. *Lev.* 26, 15. וְאִם אֶת מִשְׁפָּטִי תִגְעַל נִפְשָׁכֶם.

⁵¹ This is not to be taken in the sense of trembling as in *Esth.* 4, 4, but in the sense of "injured," or "neutralized." Comp. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s. v. חֲלַל.

⁵² This phrase has reference to Hananiah himself. 'Alvan deplores the absence of the great scholar, at a time when faith is on the decline and truth unheeded.

⁵³ This defective passage may perhaps have read חָגֵר שֶׁחֲקָמָנוּ עָלֵינוּ לְמַעַלָּה, for there is the remnant of a ק still to be seen. If this is so, it would seem, that in the absence of Hananiah, the community appointed some stranger as its head.

⁵⁴ Comp. *Pr.* 21, 27.

⁵⁵ Comp. *Targum Is.* 11, 6: וְיִינִיק וְעִיר יְהִי מְדַבֵּר לְהוֹן.

⁵⁶ Read חוֹשְׁבָנִי, pl. c. of חוֹשְׁבָנָא.

⁵⁷ Comp. וְאֵלֶּי יִחְשְׁבוּ רַעֲי, *Ho.* 7, 15.

⁵⁸ Comp. *Targum Is.* 8, 8, כִּנְחַל מִגִּבֹּר.

⁵⁹ MS. reads בְּרִי...; comp., however, *Micah* 7, 2.

⁶⁰ MS. reads לְהַפְרִיעַ.

5 כְּמַעֲשֶׂה⁶¹. יִשְׁתַּחֲמְכוּ נְבוֹנִים, חֲכָמִים יִדְמוּ⁶², בְּרֹאוֹתָם בְּעָלֵי יוֹשֶׁר

בְּקִלְמָה⁶³

6 שְׁמִי] בְּקִיּוֹם⁶⁴ עֲצָחוּ; עוֹר לְשֹׁקֶר בְּקִשְׁיוֹתוֹ, וּפְנִירוֹ אֶל מַמְעֵלָה⁶⁵.

7 צוּה־אֶל⁶⁶ בְּמַלְיָצָה הַקָּשָׁה, וְצֹרֶדֶד⁶⁷ בְּעִיצָה, בְּשִׁלְשָׁה⁶⁸ פְּעָמִים אִם־שָׁב,

וְאֵלֹו יִקְלֵל בְּקִלְלָה.

8 רְבוֹתֵינוּ רָאוּ כִי הָאֵמֶת נַעֲדָדָה, וְאִשָּׁר יִסּוּר מֵרַע תּוֹכְדִלּוֹ עֲבָרָה,

תָּמִים דַּעוֹת יִכְרִית אֱהִלֵי עוֹלָה.

(verso)

3. וְאֵלֶיהָ אֵיצֵא⁶⁹

I אֲעוֹרֵר מֵאִמֶּר שְׁלוֹמוֹת⁷⁰, שֶׁבְּכַפְרִים רְשׁוּמוֹת⁷¹ גַּם עֲלוּמוֹת לְהַכְפִּילָהּ,

⁶¹ The word מַמְעֵשֶׁה is the indirect object of the infinitives, לַהֲפִרֵּעַ, לַחֲנוּף, and לַשְׁלִטָּה, while מֵאִמִּינִים is the direct object, i. e. in his anger he disturbs the faithful people from doing their duty.

⁶² Comp. Am. 5, 13.

⁶³ Comp. Pirke Abot, iv. 23.

⁶⁴ The meaning of the whole sentence is: "men of understanding are astounded, wise men are silent when they see men of uprightness, in their (hour of) disgrace, putting his advice into execution."

⁶⁵ His face is turned to heaven, though in his stubbornness he lends aid to falsehood.

⁶⁶ Comp. I Ch. 20, 8 אֵל נֹלָדוֹ לְהַרְפֵּא.

⁶⁷ MS. reads הַקָּשָׁה וְצוֹרֶדֶד.

⁶⁸ So in MS., perhaps read בְּשִׁלְשָׁה פְּעָמִים; comp., however, below note 91. The meaning of the passage is: "give these people sharp words, and (me) your friend give advice, though this be the third time that I address you."

⁶⁹ In this letter, the Alphabetic acrostic is equally distributed; each line, excepting the last, having three letters.

⁷⁰ The purport of this and the next line is that in some previous letters (רְשׁוּמוֹת), 'Alvan had already hinted (שְׁכַפְרִים), at a reconciliation (שְׁלוֹמוֹת) between Hananiah and his opponent, and that in this letter he is stating it over again more clearly (לְהַכְפִּילָהּ) in order to relieve him of all anxiety (דִּאֲגוּתָּהּ לְהַעֲבִיר).

⁷¹ Comp. the expression דּוּרְשֵׁי רְשׁוּמוֹת Baba Kamma 82a.

- 2 הָאֲנִתָּה⁷² לְהַעֲבִיר; הֵן אֶהְבֶּתָהּ לְהַחֲבִיר⁷³ וְחִסְדּוֹ לָהּ יֵאָהֵלָה.⁷⁴
- 3 זָכָר[ה] לֹא יָסוּף לַעֲד, הֵן תִּמְצָא בְּכָל־צַעַד וְאוֹיְבֶיהָ לְטַלְטֵלָהּ.
- 4 יְהִי לָהּ לְמוֹשִׁיעַ פְּשָׁלֶיהָ⁷⁵ לְהַנִּיעַ⁷⁶ לְהַחֲסִים⁷⁷ וְלִהְיוֹתָ⁷⁸ עֲלֵיהָ.
- 5 מִנְחָמָה לְהַצְמִיחַ. נִינָה בָּהּ יִשְׁמַח, סָלָה מִמִּשְׁלֵתָהּ לֹא תִכְלָא⁷⁹
- 6 עֲרֵבָא הַמְּשִׁיב פָּן⁸⁰ עַל־אֵב לְהַשִּׁיב, הַצּוֹרֵף אֶהְיֶי עֲלֵיהָ⁸¹.
- 7 קָמִידָה יִמְחַ[ן]⁸² בְּרַגַּע רְאוּתָךְ שְׁאֵלָךְ בְּמוֹ תִפְנַע⁸³ שְׁלוֹ תְהִי בְּלֹא חֲלָחָה
- 8 תִּפְלָה יִשְׁמַע[ן] יַעֲנֶנָּה, בָּהּ אֲדוֹנֶנּוּ חֲנִיָּה, הַמְּכֹנֶה הָאֵב לְפַל וּמַעֲלָה

⁷² In the MS. the א is added above the line by the same hand.

⁷³ This is to be taken either in the sense of אֶהְבִּירָה עליכם במלים (אדון עולם) ואין שני להמשיל לוֹ לְהַחֲבִירָה (Job 16, 4), or in the sense of אֶהְבִּירָה לְהַחֲבִירָה (l. 5), i. e. in order to win, or equal your friendship he will make his affection shine upon thee.

⁷⁴ Comp. Jb. 25, 5 וְלֹא יֵאָהֵל and Rashi and Ibn Ezra *ad. loc.*

⁷⁵ In the sense of מְכַשִּׁילִים.

⁷⁶ Comp. Am. 9, 9.

⁷⁷ Comp. Ez. 24, 10.

⁷⁸ Comp. Job 21, 10.

⁷⁹ Comp. Ps. 40, 12.

⁸⁰ The only explanation of this passage seems to me to be as follows: 'Alvan assures R. Ḥananiah that his authority will last to the very day when the prophet Elijah will again appear in this world. But the object of the prophet's appearance is, according to Malachi 3, 24, that וְהָיָה לְכֹהֵן אֱלֹהִים. אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְלֹא בָנִים עַל־אֲבוֹתָם פֶּן־אֲבֹא וְהָיָה אֲתֵּי הָאָרֶץ חֶרֶם. The expression הַמְּשִׁיב פָּן is therefore an abbreviated form of reference to this sentence, and at the same time it gives the author the letter פ necessary for the acrostic.

⁸¹ Comp. Mal. 3, 2.

⁸² Comp. Deut. 33, 11.

⁸³ I can find no adequate interpretation of this clause. As a possible, but farfetched, reading I would suggest ... שְׁאֵלָה בְּמוֹ תִפְנַע... בְּרַגַּע רְאוּתָךְ, שְׁאֵלָה בְּמוֹ תִפְנַע... תִּפְלָה יִשְׁמַע... which may be rendered as follows: "He will smite your enemies while you look on, when you will entreat your God against them; be at rest and do not tremble, for he will hear and answer the prayer coming from you." For תִּפְנַע comp. Jer. 36, 25.

4. פי יעקב בן אלפרנ אלמנאזלי

- I אֶקְבִיעַ⁸⁴ שְׁלוֹמוֹת וְאַעֲרֹכֶם לְאַלֹף מִיִּדְעָה⁸⁵ וְחֹכֶם בְּעַל בִּינָה וְדִיעָה
 2 נְחֹל א... דְּתוֹת לְנְבוֹנִי[ם] מַעֲמָדוֹת וְלַחֲכָמִים מְרִיעָה.
 3 וְ[נִעַ]תִי בְּלֶה[ג] לְבִי⁸⁶ לִידַע⁸⁷ אֶהֱבֵת אוֹדְבִי לְאַלֹף בְּהֻנְעָה⁸⁸,
 4 [ע] בְּאַהֲבָתָה שְׂמַחְתִּי בְּרֻעוֹתָה בְּהוֹטְכָה הַשָּׁעָה.
 5 לְ[מ]רְעִי הוֹדַעְתִּי וְלְקְרוֹב[י] בִּיאַרְתִּי חִיבָתָה הַקְּבוּעָה,
 6 וְ[א]דְאָג וְאִירָא וְאֶקּוֹם כִּישָׁן וְאַעֲוִירָה וְיָנַע לְבָבִי בְּהֻנְעָה⁸⁹,
 7 [נ]בְּהֻלְתִּי בְּבִהְלָה, כִּי הִתְשׁוּבָה⁹⁰ לֹא-בָאָה⁹¹ וּבִסְעָר נִסְעָה.
 8 בְּשֻׁנִי⁹² פָּעַ[מִי]ם שְׁלַחְתִּי כְּתָבִים מִתַּמָּמִים⁹³ אֶמְרָה לְהוֹדַעָה,
 9 נִשְׁחַתִּי...מפ.....ה כִּי תִשׁוּבָה אֵלַי לֹא-בָאָה וְלֹא-זָכַר גְּעָה⁹⁴.
 10 אִם אֶשְׁאֵל לְעַב[רִים] לֹא יִשְׁבִיעוּנִי אֲמָרִים וְאֵהִי כְמוֹ נִתְעָה
 11 בַּיּוֹם בְּמַהוֹמוֹת בְּלִילָה בְּחִלְמוֹת וּבַעֲוִיתִים⁹⁵.....עָה

⁸⁴ The Hifil of קבע is a Payyetic form and has the same meaning as the Kal.

⁸⁵ Comp. Is. 12, 5 (Kethib); comp. also Ps. 55, 14.

⁸⁶ Comp. Ec. 12, 12.

⁸⁷ A rabbinic form for לדעת.

⁸⁸ Comp. Ben Sira 16, 25. It is used here in the sense of בצניעה. Comp. also Micah 6, 8.

⁸⁹ For verbal nouns of the form הקטלה, comp. Segal, *Mishnaic Hebrew* (JQR., 1908, 707).

⁹⁰ To have the rhyme perfect, this phrase ought to end in לה. This error is indicated in the MS. by the three circles which point to a correction on the margin that is no longer legible. What I am able to decipher reads בהשל ... האהבה והבלה which conveys no meaning.

⁹¹ So in MS.; comp. however, Jud. 16, 28 הפעם הזה.

⁹² Comp. Ps. 18, 26 and the liturgical phrase תמימים עם ומתמים (האזהו ביד).

⁹³ Comp. מחברת מנחם, s. v. גע.

⁹⁴ Comp. Job 6, 4. MS. reads ובעתים.

(T-S. LOAN 60, fol. I, recto)

12 רְבוּי אִם אֶרְבָּה הַדְּבָרִים לֹא אֶמְצֵא-קֶץ לֹא-מָרִים-אֵל⁹⁵; הִרְעֵנִי בְּשִׁבּוּעָה

13 הַדְּבָר עַל-מַהֲזָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְהֶאֱהָבָה לָמָּה נִמְאָסָה וְקִלְעָה⁹⁶ וְהִפְרָעָה.

14 מִלֶּה יִשְׁמְךָ בְּנִעְרָבִים לְיָמִים הֵם חֲשׁוּבִים וְעַם הִירָאִים לִשְׁעֵשְׁעָה⁹⁷.

15 חֲנוּן חֶסֶדָם זָכוֹר, זֶה בְּזִמּוֹן פְּרוּקָם⁹⁸ זָכוֹר, הָאֵחַ יַעֲקֹב בְּרִישׁוּעָה.

16 וְעִלְוָאנָה⁹⁹.

17 אֵצֶל אַח לְהַפְסִיעָה הִידוּעַ אִמְרוֹת וְבוּ נְטוּעָה¹⁰⁰ יוֹבֵל בְּשׁוּשׁ¹⁰¹

18 וְלֹא בּוֹזָעָה אֵלֵי יַעֲקֹב בְּרִישׁוּעָה

5. מִכַּתְּבָה פִּי אֶל-חֹבֶר מִכְתָּאֵר¹⁰²

I עֲתָרִי עִיתוֹר¹⁰³ הוֹבְטָלָה, עֲלוּסָה¹⁰⁴ מַעֲלָסָה הַשְּׁלָלָה, וְתַפְּשִׁל וְתָהִי
לְמִשְׁחָק.

⁹⁵ Comp. above note 66.

⁹⁶ The Pual of קִלַּע is a Payyetanian form.

⁹⁷ The meaning of this and the next line is not clear to me.

⁹⁸ Comp. Lam. 5, 8.

⁹⁹ = "And its superscription, or address is." 'Ulwanun is the Arabic for address, or superscription of any writing.

¹⁰⁰ The construction of this sentence is perhaps as if it read אֵצֶל אַח הִידוּעַ, which could be rendered as follows: "This (letter) is to make its way to the well known friend in whom my thoughts are planted."

¹⁰¹ We know of two other letters the addresses of which begin with the expression תוֹבֵל בְּשׁוּשׁ. See Worman, *Forms of Address in Genizah Letters*, vi, vii (JQR., XIX, 724).

¹⁰² = Mukhtar, the name of a person. Benjamin of Tudela mentions a certain Mukhtar who was one of the prominent men of Hamath (מִסְעוֹת) (50). In this letter the acrostic of עֲלוּן is given twice, at the beginning of the first as well as of the second clause of each line.

¹⁰³ Infin. and verbal noun of עָתַר.

¹⁰⁴ Pass. pt. of עָלַס, while מַעֲלָסָה is a noun formed from the same verb with the same inflection as עָבַר. For the rendering of this whole letter see above p. 224 f.

- 2 לַתַּחַת הַדּוֹרָה, לְקַצּוֹי קַצּוֹת הַפֶּרֶדָּה, וְחוֹדֵק¹⁰⁵ וְתִדְחֵק¹⁰⁶
- 3 וְהִסְבִּיחָהּ¹⁰⁷ וְצָרוֹת, וְיִקְיִיבֶיהָ הַבְּצוּרוֹת¹⁰⁸, וְשָׁנֵי דָתוֹת עָלֶיהָ הוֹחֵק
- 4 נִשְׁתַּנּוּ חֲסִתֶּיהָ הַחֲרוּתוֹת, נִגְרָעָה מִן אֲשַׁפְּתוֹת, וּמָטָה בְּכַל-מֶרְחָק
- 5 חֲסִפּוֹתָהּ¹⁰⁹ בְּמִזְמוֹת, חֲנִיקוֹתָהּ בְּעוֹלוֹת וּמִרְמוֹת, וְלֹא מִצָּאָה מָנוּחַ
- מִדּוֹחֵק
- 6 זָמְכּוּ לְהַלְשִׁינָהּ, בְּלִקְיַחַת נִזְרָמִס¹¹⁰ לְעִנְיָהּ¹¹¹, לְשִׁבְרָה בְּאֶפֶר
- הַנֶּשֶׁחַק
- 7 קֹוֹת[ה] לְנִגְיִיחַת אֹור וְתִהְיֶה וְתִאֲפֵל מִחַת אֹור¹¹² וְתִדּוּם¹¹³ לְבָהִיר
- בְּשִׁחֻק¹¹⁴
- 8 בְּשִׁבְרָה רָאָה, בְּרַעֲיִית אִמְרָה אֶתָּה רָעָה, אֲדֹנִי, וּבִחְרָה¹¹⁶ הַחֲבֵר
- בִּירְבִּי יִצְחָק נ"י

¹⁰⁵ Comp. Is. 28, 28.

¹⁰⁶ Hof'al of דחק. For similar grammatical formation, see Zunz, *S. P.*, 417.

¹⁰⁷ Comp. Ps. 55, 11.

¹⁰⁸ Pl. of בצורת; comp. מכלול (ed. Lyck), 161a. See, however, Jer. 14, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Comp. p. Shabb. 10b פילפולין.

¹¹⁰ Comp. the expression גזר דין.

¹¹¹ For the sake of the rhyme instead of לְעִנְיָהּ.

¹¹² Comp. Is. 59, 9.

¹¹³ Comp. Job 37, 21.

¹¹⁴ Comp. Ps. 37, 7.

¹¹⁵ רְעִיָּה in the sense of pasturing is Talmudic (*Yoma* 66a), but here it is used in the sense of guiding.

¹¹⁶ MS. reads יבחר.

(verso)

6. מכאתבה פי אבן בטא אלרחבי¹¹⁷

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | עֲלִי־עֶרֶשׁ בְּעוֹד נֹמָה ¹¹⁸ | וְעוֹד אִישׁוֹן ¹¹⁹ לֹא נִרְחַק |
| 2 | לְרִיעַ טוֹב זָכְרָתִי ¹²⁰ | אֲשֶׁר בָּלַב מְאֹד הוֹחֵק ¹²¹ , |
| 3 | וְצִפְיָתִי לְמוֹ שְׁמֻעוֹ | וְגַם הִכְיָתִי ¹²² כְּמוֹ נִדְחָק. |
| 4 | נָטִיתִי אֵלַי עוֹבְרִים | וּלְבָאִים מִמְרָחֵק: |
| 5 | "בְּאֵרוֹ ¹²³ לִי אֲמִירָאח | אֲשֶׁר עָמִי הָקוֹ־חֵק". |
| 6 | נְמוּ־לִי: "מָה תִּשְׁאַל, | וְאַל תִּבְדֹּק מְאֹד רָחֵק". |
| 7 | אֵלַי לְבִי הַשִּׁיבוֹתִי | וְהִנֵּה הוּא כְּמוֹ מִדְחָק ¹²⁴ |
| 8 | בְּטִי ¹²⁵ : "קָרִב" כְּמוֹ עֶרְמָה | וְעַל־ ¹²⁶ דָּלָב מְאֹד שָׁחֵק. |
| 9 | רִאֲתָם נֶפֶשׁ מִצַּעֲרִים ¹²⁷ | בְּרַב־בְּהֵל ¹²⁸ וּבְרוֹחֵק. |

¹¹⁷ A certain אלרחבי בן דאוד אברהם is mentioned in two Genizah letters, one of which was written in 1029 (Comp. Worman, *ibid.*, 724, 739). For other men by the name of אלרחבי see Steinschneider, *Introduction* (JQR., XI, 611). Whether our בטא אבן is the same family name as בטא mentioned by Steinschneider (*ibid.*, IX, 238, and XIII, 464) is doubtful.

¹¹⁸ Pr. 23, 21.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7, 9.

¹²⁰ זכר with ל instead of acc. is unusual, due here to the acrostic.

¹²¹ Comp. Job 19, 23.

¹²² Perf. of חום; comp. אריד בשיחי ואהימה Ps. 55, 3.

¹²³ Comp. Hab. 2, 2.

¹²⁴ Punctuation found in MS., it modifies לְבִי, i. e. while my heart was so oppressed, I said to myself," etc.

¹²⁵ Perf. of בטא; comp. Zunz, *S. P.*, 379, iv.

¹²⁶ על instead of ב.

¹²⁷ MS. reads מַצְעָרִים; comp. above note 47.

¹²⁸ = בהלה; comp. Ben Jehuda, מלון, vol. I, 471, where other instances are cited.

- 10 הִידְעָתָם בְּרֵאֵי־אֶחָד¹²⁹ בַּעַת יְלֹךְ וַיִּתְּרַחֵק ?
- 11 מֵאִסְתִּי בְּדַבְרֵיהֶם וַאֲפָנָה לְמוֹחֵק¹³⁰
- 12 חֲזוֹת אוֹרָה כְּמוֹ־נֹנָה וּכְבָּהִיר בִּשְׁחָק.
- 13 זְכוֹר אָחִי הָעֲרוּבָה¹³¹ וְאַל תִּפְרַח אֲשֶׁר הוֹחֵק;
- 14 קָרָא מְלִי, וְגַם קָדַם תְּשׁוּבָתָהּ וְאַל תִּרְחָק
- 15 וְשָׁלוֹמָהּ יִגְדֹל וְגַם יַעֲצֵם¹³² אַבְרָהָם בְּרִי־יִצְחָק.

7. ואלה אינא

- 1 עֲדִיר־אֶחָד טוֹב אֲשֶׁר נִרְחָק וּלְשִׁמְעוּ נַפְשִׁי מִשׁוֹטְטָהּ,
- 2 לְצַפּוּיוֹ¹³³ נִבְהַל־לֵב וְאִין נִקְדֵּר בַּעֲלֻטָּהּ¹³⁴.
- 3 וּפְנִיתִי אֵלַי הוֹלְכִים וְאִין מְגִיד וּמִבִּטָּה

(folio 2, recto)

- 4 נִתְעַתִּי כְּמוֹ תוֹעַ[ה], כְּמוֹ שׁוֹטָה הִנְשֻׁטָּה.
- 5 בְּכֵן־אָחִי, בְּחֵי עוֹלָם¹³⁶, אֲשֶׁר חֲסִדוֹ לִיצוּרָיו מְאֹד הָטָה.
- 6 זָחָה אֵלַי תְּשׁוּבָתִי כִּי נַפְשִׁי מְאֹד נִקְטָה,
- 7 וְאַל תִּמָּאֵם בְּרַע טוֹב בַּחֲשָׁקָה¹³⁷ מְאֹד עֲטָה¹³⁸.

¹²⁹ = "Do you know that he is no friend (of mine), when he is gone away?"; comp. צַר־לִי עֲלֶיךָ אָחִי יְהוֹנָתָן, II Sam. 1, 26.

¹³⁰ Pass. pt. Hif. of חָקַק, meaning that which is inscribed, i. e. he despised their words and turned to the letter as a means of communication.

¹³¹ Comp. Pr. 17, 18.

¹³² Comp. Ex. 1, 7.

¹³³ A verbal noun with the objective suffix, i. e. in waiting for him, etc.

¹³⁴ Comp. Ez. 12, 6.

¹³⁵ Comp. Ec. 8, 10.

¹³⁶ Comp. Dn. 12, 7.

¹³⁷ = "In thy love he is exceedingly wrapped up." Comp. וּשְׁבוּלַת חֲשֶׁק, Immanuel, Lemberg 1870, 21. MS. reads שְׁטַפְתָּהוּ בַחֲשֻׁקָךְ.

¹³⁸ Comp. Jer. 43, 12. The use of עָטָה with כִּי instead of the acc. is not biblical.

- 8 בְּאַרְלִי וְאַל תִּבּוֹחַ בִּי־אִי־לִי הִשְׁקַטָּה¹³⁹.
 9 רָאֵה־נָא וְאַל תִּזְנַח אֲשֶׁר אֶצְלָה מֵאֵד נָטָה.
 10 הִגְדֵּנָא זִכּוֹר־חַק וְלָמָּה זֶה תִּמְעִיטָה.
 11 מֵאֵד שׁוּבָה נָא לְמִן נִכְחִי, בִּי לֹא טוֹבָה הִקְטָטָה.
 12 חֲשָׁה נָא [בְּ]תְהוֹרָה וּלְכַתֵּב הַבִּיטָה.
 13 זִרְו־¹⁴⁰נָא בְּעִרּוּבָה וְאַל מִמָּה¹⁴¹ תִּמּוּטָה¹⁴².
 14 קִדְּם־נָא צִרְכָּה וְאַל תִּנְתַּק הַמוּטָה.
 15 וְשָׁלוֹם־רַב קִבֵּל־נָא יִצְחָק בְּנִיפַת הַנּוֹדַע בְּבִן־בִּטָּה.

8. אֵלִי בֶן אֶלְמִנְאוּלִי יַעֲקֹב

- 1 עָלִי אֲמַשִּׁי¹⁴³ כִּי נָטָה וְאַשְׁחָה בְּמַצְעִי
 2 לְאַלּוֹהִי, בִּרְ¹⁴⁴מֵאֵד, עֲרִיתִי¹⁴⁵, וְאִזּוּ זָכְרוּ בְּהִבְעִי
 3 וּמִישְׁנָה מֵאֲד־קֶצֶת¹⁴⁶ וְאַפְסַע עָלִי פִסְעִי.
 4 נָטִיתִי אֵלַי קֶסֶתִי וּבִקְוִלָּמִס בְּהִקְבִּיעִי
 5 בְּעוֹד־בִּקֵּר הִם סִרְעַף וְהִבְהִילִי וְהִנִּיעִי
 6 נִרְפַּח־לֵב אֵלַי קִרְבּוֹ תִּשׁוּבוּתִיו בְּדִירוֹ¹⁴⁷ דַּעִי.

¹³⁹ Comp. above note 89.¹⁴⁰ Comp. לְסַעְדִּי זִרְיוֹ Targum Ps. 70, 2.¹⁴¹ כִּמְנָה = I can find no other instance of this usage.¹⁴² Impf. 2 masc. of מוּט to deviate from.¹⁴³ Comp. (קִרְבוֹת לְפָוּרִים, אֶסְפֶּרָה אֶל חוֹק) וְהִגִּיה אֲמַשִּׁי כְּהַעֲרִיב שְׁמַשִּׁי. See also Ben Jehuda, *ibid.*, 300.¹⁴⁴ Comp. Job 11, 4.¹⁴⁵ Perf. קָל of עוֹר, not biblical.¹⁴⁶ Perf. קָל of קִיץ, not biblical.¹⁴⁷ בְּדִירוֹ = פִּזְרוֹ they scattered my thoughts. See Jastrow, *s. v.*

(verso)

- 7 חֲשֵׁתִי אֲזִי לְהַשִּׁיבֻּ וְאִם עָצַם (מ) זִיעִי¹⁴⁸
- 8 וְזָכְרָה אֶח בְּהֶאֱלִיפִי¹⁴⁹ וְחִבְתָּהּ בְּהֶצְנִיעִי¹⁵⁰
- 9 קָשׁוּב אָחִי וְאֵל תִּטֵּשׁ בִּי רַעֲיֹאתִי¹⁵¹ וְגַם יוֹדְעִי
9. וְאֵלֶיהָ¹⁵⁰ אֵינָא פִי הִלֵּל בֶּן קָרָה אֶלְחָלֵב¹⁵³ אֶלְצֶאֱרָפִי
- 1 עֲדִי בָּאָה כַּעַץ שְׁתוּל
- 2 לְאֹר בֶּקֶר הוּא יִדְמָה כְּבָרֶק אֹר שְׁלֹחַ
- 3 וְ רָאִיו מִצְלִיחַ
- 4 נָאָה הוּא כ
- 5 בְּהִדְרוֹ א וּבֶשׁ... תּוֹ לְהַצְרִיחַ
- 6 נְטָרִיָּה עָלִי אוֹיְבֵי יִצְלִיחַ
- 7 א יִרְוִיחוּ וְכֹל שֶׁנֶּאֱזָר יִנְלִיחַ
- 8 ב יִשְׁמֶרְהוּ וּבִקְמִיו אֶף יִצְלִיחַ
- 9 רַב מִשִּׁיעוֹ יִהְיֶה לוֹ וּמַעֲשָׂיו בְּלִי לֵה... לִיחַ
- 10 הוּא כֶּהָן וּבֶן תּוֹרָה קוֹנֶה לֵב וְצוּלִיחַ

¹⁴⁸ = "though my fear was strong," comp. בִּרְתָּתִי וּבְזִיעִי Lev. R. 11. The מ is a dittographical error.

¹⁴⁹ This may perhaps be a denom. of אֶלֶף, and the meaning is when I make thy memory superior to everything and when I treasure up (בְּהֶצְנִיעִי) thy love then listen to me, etc.

¹⁵⁰ Comp. above text No. 4, l. 3.

¹⁵¹ Nu. 11, 15.

¹⁵² From here to the end of the MS. the writing is so faded that it seemed hardly possible to decipher any word. It was only by holding the MS. in a certain angle to the light that the following transcription was made. Owing to the very defective state of the text, I refrain from punctuation and annotation.

¹⁵³ Comp. Steinschneider, *Introduction*, No. 206.

II מִיּוֹחַס הוּא וְגַם קְרוֹי אֶלְפָּצֶל מְצִיחַ¹⁵⁴

10. אֵלִיָּה אֵיזָא בֶן יִצְחָק אֶלְעֻזָּאִי אֶלְעֻזָּאֵר¹⁵⁵

I עֲדֵי יִדְמָה הִירָא הַנּוֹקֵק כְּבֵר כֶּסֶף

2 יוֹקֵר וְגַם אֵלִיךְ מֵאֵד כּוֹסֵף

¹⁵⁴ Comp. *JQR.*, XIX, 739, No. lxx.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 741, No. lxxvi.